

VA HEALTHCARE NETWORK UPSTATE NEW YORK AT ALBANY



VOLUNTARY SERVICE ANNUAL NARRATIVE FY'04 RCN 10-0006

MISSION: Voluntary Service is committed to the support of quality patient care through the development of volunteer programs, recruitment and retention of volunteers, utilization of community resources, and coordination of community activities which are beneficial to the medical center and rewarding to the volunteer.

VISION: The Stratton VA Medical Center Volunteer Service will be recognized as a program of excellence within the VA Healthcare Network Upstate New York, Veterans Health Administration and the community.

WE VALUE the sacrifices of our Nation's Veterans, the dedication of our volunteers, the contributions and support of individuals, community groups and businesses, fraternal organizations and Veteran Service Organizations.

1. Program Workload, Development and Trends

(a) Volunteer Hours

Stratton VAMC volunteers supplement staff in all Care Lines and our Service Line within the medical center facility, the Fisher House, our off-station sites such as the Veterans Readjustment Counseling Center, Compensated Work Therapy and Community Day Program, our Community Based Outpatient Clinics, Contract Community Nursing Homes and the Saratoga VA National Cemetery. Our VA volunteers are our most valuable resources. They are a crucial part of the quality care veterans receive at our facilities and outreach programs and are our liaisons to the community. They are the American peoples' representatives at our Saratoga VA National Cemetery where they provide military funeral honors and offer consolation. Our volunteers' commitment and dedication to their assignments sets the example of how VA will continue to do its part to keep the Nation's promise to veterans. Their generosity of spirit makes our community a better place.

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Dolores T. Blake was named Director of the Gerald B.H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery on June 27, 2004 when she transferred from the Beverly National Cemetery in New Jersey. She was extremely impressed with the cemetery's entire Volunteer Program, including the Honor Guard, office and Public Information volunteers. She was not expecting so many volunteers with the knowledge, dedication and friendliness that she has found in Saratoga.

Our theme for our annual awards recognition ceremony this year was "Our Volunteers Reach for the Stars." Our volunteers have helped us to maintain valuable volunteer programs as we embark on new horizons. A formal dinner ceremony was held on Sunday, April 25th at the Italian Community Center in Albany, New York. In addition, we held two volunteer award socials to celebrate with volunteers who were unable to attend the dinner. On April 28th we held an award social at the Saratoga VA National Cemetery and on April 29th we held a social at our VAMC auditorium. Our goal is to make every effort to personally honor and thank each volunteer for their contribution.

OVERALL TRENDS

	FY'02	FY'03	FY'04	FY'03-04
Total Volunteer Hours	105,419	101,968	100,434	-1,534
Regularly Scheduled	93,489	92,334	89,602	-2,732
Occasional Hours	11,930	9,634	10,832	+1,198
# Volunteers	953	917	926	+9
# Students	142	117	125	+8
Volunteers Recruited	183	169	179	+10

{Number of volunteers and number of students for fiscal years 2002 and 2003 were adjusted to match "2003 VAVS Data by VISN with Goals for 2004" spreadsheet report received from headquarters. Statistics for FY'04 were taken from Voluntary Services RS and occasional Hours-VS01 Part 2 Summary}

Although the total number of hours was slightly lower this year, our number of volunteers has grown this fiscal year due to our recruitment efforts.

*Note: The Independent Sector and the Points of Light Foundation have determined that the value of volunteer time should be calculated at \$17.19 per hour. Based on the total number of volunteer hours for fiscal year 2004, the estimated monetary value of donated time can be assumed as **\$1,726,460.40**. The value of their total contribution in terms of increased patient satisfaction and customer "value added" service cannot be calculated.

(b) Recruitment Initiatives: The Volunteer Manager and Volunteer Specialist use every opportunity to spread awareness of our Volunteer Program and extend

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an invitation to become a part of our VA healthcare team as a VA Volunteer. Our Volunteer Specialist works closely with staff and as special projects are identified or there is a backlog in a specific area, volunteers are mobilized to assist staff until completion.

During this year, we continued our traditional recruitment efforts including flyers, letters to area school guidance counselors and local businesses, a Volunteer Opportunity listing in our Network Volunteer Newsletter, career fairs, affiliations with local schools, colleges and vocational training centers, and through referrals from our VA volunteers. Public Service Announcements about our student volunteer opportunities were sent to the media. Volunteer opportunities are posted on our Network 2 VAVS Website, Volunteer.gov/gov , Channel 6 World at Home, and the Volunteer Match Internet websites.

We welcomed students from the City of Albany's Summer Volunteer Program to our summer youth program. This community program is designed to meet the needs of economically disadvantaged youth to expand career awareness, prevent school dropouts, improve their basic skills and provide encouragement to pursue educational opportunities.

A new partnership was created with Career Links, a job retention program that utilizes pre-placement job readiness through volunteerism.

The **Volunteer.gov/gov Project** is a website initiative to enhance the public's ability to locate volunteer opportunities. The initiative is part of the USA Freedom Corps Volunteer Network, a collaboration of the largest nonprofit and volunteer resource centers in the country. Agencies and offices including the New York State Division of Veterans Affairs, the Department of the Interior, Headquarters and Network 2 Voluntary Service staff, and Network 2 Behavioral Health personnel partnered to build the website. The website allows potential volunteers to review specific job descriptions, submit their application to become a VA volunteer, and have their application reviewed via the website. After a one-year pilot program limiting the positions to Behavioral Health Care Line opportunities was completed, Network 2 expanded opportunities to encompass all care lines. A total of 74 position descriptions have been developed and posted. This website is limited to opportunities within Network 2; however, at the conclusion of this year's pilot program a decision will be made whether the website will be deployed nationally, linking other Networks to potential volunteers.

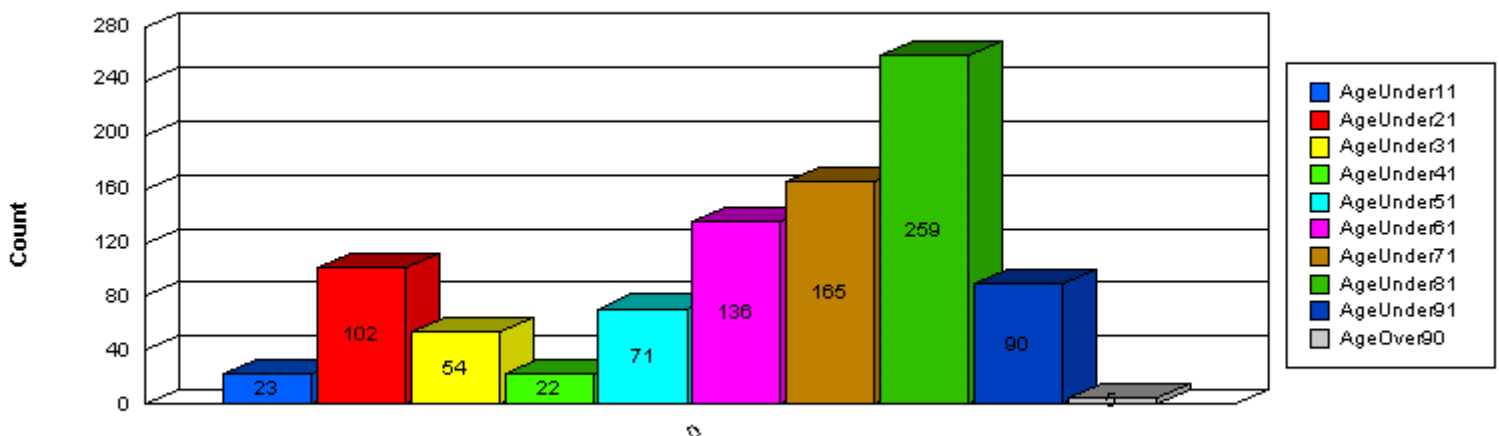
During this year, we also **added** the following initiatives:

- An article entitled "Volunteers Add Extra Special Care" written by the Volunteer Manager was printed in the Jewish World newspaper's October 2003 issue
- Articles written by the Volunteer Manager on "National Volunteer Week" and our "Welcome Buddy Program" were published in the Empire State Marine (Department of New York, Marine Corps League publication).

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- Volunteer Recruitment information was provided at the following:
 - 1) Customer Service Fair in VAMC auditorium – February 27
 - 2) Open House for Veterans Benefits at Stratton VAMC – April 23
 - 3) Women's Health Expo at the Empire State Plaza - April 26 & 27
 - 4) Veterans Appreciation Night at Bruno Baseball Stadium - July 1
 - 5) Opening of the newly located VA Primary Care Practice in Troy – July 12
 - 6) Saratoga Race Track's Proud to Be an American Day – August 30
- Two VA Volunteers assisted our efforts by having recruitment articles published in a Retired Public Service Employee Newsletter and the International Association of Administrative Professions Newsletter.
- The Volunteer Specialist staffed a booth at the Delmar Thompson Learning Center Publishing Company's volunteer fair.
- A Public Service Announcement beta tape entitled "A Million Reasons to Volunteer" was sent to our local news channel.
- The Volunteer Manager spoke at the Albany Post Office's employee veterans group on September 10, 2004 about our volunteer opportunities on evening and weekend hours.
- Media kit folders and brochures received from headquarters were used throughout the year to assist us in recruitment and awareness efforts.

Age of RS Volunteers



National Volunteer Recruitment Campaign: Every Voluntary Service office across the country was tasked in February '04 to increase the number of volunteers, specifically the 20-49 age group and students. Although we did not reach the tasked goal for all categories, our FY'04 totals exceeded FY'03.

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As of the end of September 2004, the results are as follows:

AGE GROUP	FY'03	GOAL	FY'04	FY'04 Compared to Tasked Goal
RS Volunteers	917	+53 = 970	926	-44
Students	117	+25 = 142	125	-17
20-49 Age	73	+30 = 103	139	+36

The Director's Office has supported us in our volunteer recruitment efforts by assigning a college student in a Cooperative Education Program, as a part time Community Relations Specialist, on June 27, 2004. Her position supports both the Director of Public Relations & Marketing and Voluntary Service. For Voluntary Service, her focus is to outreach to local businesses and education centers and meet with VA staff to create more volunteer positions on evening and weekend hours. Unfortunately, before her orientation to Voluntary Service was completed, she was detailed to the Director's Office through the end of the fiscal year. The recruitment gains noted above were due to the extraordinary efforts of our Volunteer Specialist. We have great expectations for the time when this added position becomes an effective member of the Voluntary Service Team.

(c) Corporate and Community Partnerships

The Document Company Xerox in Albany created and donated colorful, glossy posters for all our holidays for our wards and clinic bulletin boards and as placemats for our Adult Day Health Care lunchroom. On October 22, 2003, employees presented our medical center a \$1000 towards the purchase of a physical therapy hi-lo table and volunteered as "Welcome Buddies", visiting newly admitted patients and giving them comfort items.

Albany Law School faculty and students held a Veterans Day fundraiser to thank the veterans and show their appreciation for their service to our country and donated the funds to our clothing and toiletry program.

The Volunteer Manager was the keynote speaker at **Glendaal Elementary School's** Veterans Day Program on November 10th. The students, parents and faculty conducted a toiletry drive throughout the month of November to support our medical center's "Because We Care" clothing and toiletry program.

Hannaford Grocery Store employees visited each inpatient and Adult Day Health Care veteran and presented him or her with a large bag of toiletry items on November 12, 2003.

RPI College Students decorated our auditorium in a Thanksgiving theme on November 18th.

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Albany River Rats Professional Hockey Team held a special “VA Night” game, providing free tickets to our hospitalized veterans and reduced tickets to volunteers and employees. Hockey Players visited our hospitalized veterans and outpatient clinic waiting rooms in March 1, 2004 and handed out autographed team photos.

The US Army Field Band performed for our long term care patients on March 24th.

A **Bike Run by the Veterans Nomads** was held on July 10th to benefit the Stratton VA Medical Center. Bikers from all over the state brought clothing, toiletries and funds for our indigent patient program. Volunteers, staff and patients welcomed them under our parking pavilion. Bikers visited patients on inpatient wards that were unable to come outside.



A Duanesburg florist included our medical center in **Teleflora’s “Make Someone Smile Week”** by delivering and distributing flower arrangements in happy face mugs to our long-term care patients and bouquets to our nursing stations on July 14, 2004.

Siena Serves Day on September 11, 2004 brought fifteen college students to our medical center and Fisher House. They completed their community service project by assisting with inpatient ward activities and preparing dinner for Fisher House guests.

McGeary’s Restaurant held a “Sail Fish Party” community fundraiser on September 12, 2004 and collected monetary donations to support our Voluntary Service program.

Key Bank’s Neighbors Make the Difference Day: bank employees came to our Fisher House and volunteered their time September 14, 2004 to do a fall cleanup of the Fisher House grounds and flowerbeds.

Price Chopper (Golub Corporation) donated coffee, toiletries and hard candy for our inpatient wards and clinics throughout the entire year.

Mohawk Dairy donated ice cream mix for our ice cream machine throughout the year.

Greenville Central High School students have formed an intergenerational partnership with our Adult Day Health Care program. Two teams of 10-15 students each alternate monthly visits. The students and veterans play cards, trivia games and discuss sports and current events. The students also performed a holiday concert this year.

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The Schenectady Association of Retarded Citizens group and the **Maple Ridge ARC** visit and participate in interactive activities with our Adult Day Health Care program on a monthly basis.

The 348th General Hospital HUS, Albany, NY held their annual conference for military and civilian nurses at our VAMC, followed by visitation and gift distribution to our hospitalized veterans.

(d) Gifts and Donations

Voluntary Service actively promotes awareness of patient activities and medical center programs and encourages community support. Our Network 2 Volunteer Newsletter includes a Donation Needs List of contributions that will benefit patient care. The Donation Needs List is also posted on our Volunteer Bulletin Board and periodically attached to our VAVS Committee minutes. Care Line Managers and staff are invited to VAVS Committee Meetings to appeal for specific needs. During this fiscal year, we are proud to say that all requests for support were approved due to our ability to identify a sponsoring donor or availability of general post fund monies.

During this fiscal year, volunteer organizations donated funds to provide the following:

- Electric Hi Lo Mat Table for our Physical Therapy department (\$2,900.00)
- Six wheelchairs for our Lobby and 5B clinic for outpatients' use
- A clothes dryer and two electric irons for veterans use on our psychiatry unit
- Three CD players for our operating room for patients to listen to music while undergoing eye surgery
- Two 10' x 10' foldable canopies for Recreation activities
- A microwave oven and toaster oven for ward 7B
- A CD player for our Hemodialysis Unit
- A VHS/DVD player and two can openers for our SAARP Unit
- Sweatshirts, tee shirts, jeans, sweatpants, underwear, coats, hats, scarves, gloves and sneakers for our "Because We Care" clothing program
- Coffee pots, coffee and VCR's for clinic areas.
- Funds to subsidize meals prepared in the Community Day Program for patients with low income in order to furnish them one healthy meal each day
- Funds for cookouts, parties and off-station trips for hospitalized veterans and veterans followed in our structured outpatient programs.
- Funds to send veterans to participate in the Winter Sports Clinic, Golden Age Games, Wheelchair Games and Creative Arts Festival

All wheelchairs and other equipment purchased through donated funds are stenciled, or a plaque is attached, to acknowledge the donor. Voluntary Service is committed to insuring that patients and staff are aware of the generosity of our veterans' service organizations,

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fraternal organizations and the community. Our thank you letters to the donors inform them of the permanent acknowledgment.

Our **Hoptel Unit** has a new guest room thanks to the Disabled American Veterans' Vibert O. Fryer Chapter 88 and Auxiliary who donated funds to completely renovate a conference room on the unit into a much needed, two-bed guest room. The plaque on the door acknowledges the donation from this Chapter in memory of Frank and Edith Pidgeon, Life Members.

The success of our **"Because We Care" and "Welcome Buddy " programs** has increased community and organization donation support. During this year, veterans' spouses and women inpatients who were impressed with receiving afghans by our Welcome Buddy volunteer are now making afghans for our program to help other veterans. We also received a significant number of cash donations in memory of veterans who received their care at our facility.

Voluntary Service supports our medical center's **Comping/Service Recovery Program** for our veteran patients and guests. During this fiscal year, a total of ten 10-minute prepaid phone cards and 170 canteen books were donated by our Service to maintain this customer service initiative. **In addition** to supplying these items, Voluntary Service provided coffee and soda service to clinic areas when notified that their clinics were running late.

Our **Volunteer Transportation Program** acquired three 12-passenger vans and one 7-passenger van on May 21, 2004 at a value of **\$72,236**, which is reflected in our noncash donation figure.

DONATION TRENDS

	FY'02	FY'03	F'04	Comparison FY'03 to 04
CASH	\$198,707	\$127,740*	\$102,506.47	-\$25,234
NON-CASH	\$301,952	\$295,320	\$355,752.10	+\$60,432
TOTALS	\$500,659	\$423,060*	\$458,258.57	+\$35,199

*Fiscal Year 2003 cash donations mistakenly included \$46,869 in research general post funds on last year's narrative report. This year's narrative report shows corrected figure.

(e) **Customer Service Initiatives:**

Our volunteer program has worked hard this year to maintain programs plus explore opportunities to increase services for our patients and the medical center. We continue to utilize the "Satisfaction Through Service" customer service resource guide developed by the VAVS Customer Service Task Force for our training programs.

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Patient programs and amenities that have been maintained during this fiscal year:

- Flower deliveries to patients
- Library Book Cart
- Craft Cart, playing cards, search-a-word and crossword books
- All occasion cards, postage stamps, envelopes, writing paper and pens
- All-American Coloring Books and crayons to emergency room's toy box
- Phone Cards and CDTA Bus Tokens
- Comfort kits (to new admissions) and toiletry items provided to all inpatient wards, Hoptel, Community Day Program and Homeless Program
- Canteen Coupon Books
- Coffee Program for patients in inpatient and clinic areas (2,656 lbs of coffee in FY04), including coffee filters, creamer, tea bags, sugar, sweet 'n low and instant coffee
- Lap Robes, Afghans, Non-skid slippers, Trachea Bibs
- Sweatshirts, sweatpants, tee shirts, jeans, underwear, socks, sneakers, coats, scarves, gloves and hats to patients in need (to patients referred by staff social workers and providers)
- Reading material and videos
- Greeter/Information Desk volunteer coverage
- Hoptel Unit food and snack items for veterans and their caregivers
- Pet Therapy dog visitation
- Maintain a number of wheelchairs in our main lobby designated for outpatients.
- Courtesy carts placed in main lobby for the convenience of veterans and visitors
- Provide magnifying eyeglasses for veterans who are not eligible for eyeglasses.
- Facilitated the provision of daily newspapers for long-term patients whose families provide the funds.
- Maintain a Spring Water cooler and cups in the main lobby for patients and visitors to soothe waiting time (\$1,315.95 this fiscal year)
- Maintain fish aquariums in waiting room areas for patients' relaxation and enjoyment (\$3,600 each year).

Volunteers' customer service initiatives to assist employees and VA programs:

- Assist Research Staff by testing interview instruments before they are taken out into the field with actual study participants. The valuable input the volunteers give the research team directly translates into improvement in the quality of the measuring instruments.
- Large and small mail-out projects are folded, labeled, stuffed and sealed
- Assist staff with medical center programs and special events' activities (decorating, escorting patients, refreshment serving, set up and cleanup duties.)
- Provide Honor Guard services at the Saratoga VA National Cemetery
- Assist in data collection to assess length of patient waiting time in clinics

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- Assist in stocking and retrieving “Quick Card” customer service surveys
- Van Drivers shuttle lab specimens, X-rays and paperwork from our medical center, CBOC’s and community hospitals

Transportation Costs for Cardiology Outpatients: Our medical center has had instances where an outpatient requires referral to the West Roxbury or West Haven VAMC’s for cardiac procedures but are not eligible for VA beneficiary travel to pay the travel costs. Sometimes veterans do not have family to transport them and cannot afford the cost. The VA will provide transportation for inpatients, but there is no mechanism to provide transportation to outpatients that do not meet beneficiary travel criteria. The Volunteer Manager established a General Post Fund and worked with the Veterans Service Center Manager and the Social Work Executive to create a procedure for travel arrangements and purchase orders to the train or bus vendor. This program is a pilot program limited to cardiology patients. Depending on our ability to obtain donations, expansion to other subspecialties could be considered.

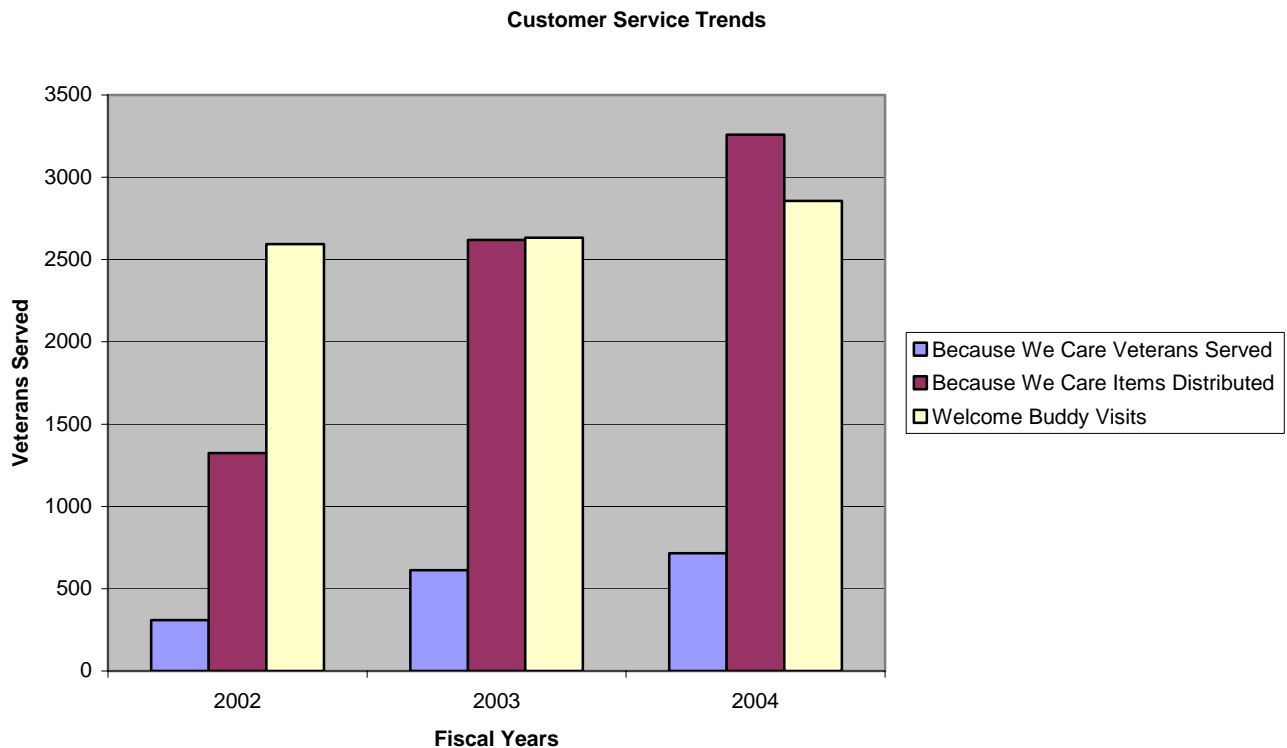
Shuttle Service: This customer service program is separate from the Volunteer Transportation Program and is supervised by the Volunteer Specialist. Coverage is scheduled Monday through Friday, daytime shift, to and from our parking lot and front entrance. Volunteers provided this courtesy to an average of **895** veterans and visitors a month.

Our **Welcome Buddy Program** volunteers visited **2,856** newly admitted patients throughout this fiscal year (**224 more veterans than last FY**). In addition to the friendly visit, each veteran was given a “Thinking of You” card, an afghan, non-skid slipper socks, bag of toiletries, a copy of the Schedule of Recreation Activities sheet for the week, and a “Patient Rights and Responsibilities” pamphlet.

Our **“Because We Care”** program provided for the needs of **715** veterans (**102 more than last year**). A total of **3,258 items** provided by this customer service program included sweatpants, sweatshirts, underwear, sneakers, socks, tee shirts, jeans, hats, gloves, coats, carry bags, toiletry items, shower shoes, pajamas and belts. In addition, veterans were provided postage stamps, envelopes, CDTA Bus Tokens, phone cards and Canteen Books. Voluntary Service conducted an employee coat drive in autumn to meet the coat needs of our veterans.

In addition, Voluntary Service provided a box of various clothing items to the nursing supervisors for inpatient and emergency room patients’ emergency needs that occur on off-tour hours when our Volunteer office is closed. We also increased the number of sneakers, clothing and undergarments for women veterans to meet the growing needs.

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Our hospitalized veterans, Hoptel guests and Adult Day Health Care program veterans are offered **haircuts** once a week by a local beautician under contract with the Canteen Service. Voluntary Service provides \$10 worth of Canteen Books for each haircut for those who do not have them so that no veteran is denied this service. During this fiscal year, Voluntary Service provided **2,880 canteen books** for this program.

Customer Service Steering Committee: Our Volunteer Specialist is an active member of the Customer Service Steering Committee and the Customer Service PR/Marketing Sub-committee. She is the principal trainer for new greeters at the Greeter Desk.

Our Volunteer Specialist plays a major role on the **Lobby Committee's** sub-committee that organizes and arranges the display cases in our main lobby. The displays have featured World War I, WW II, Korean War, POW/MIA, Women Veterans, and historical veteran and medical center memorabilia.

(f) **Successful Events, Projects and Activities**

We partnered with the New York State Military Museum on a **Veterans History Project** to collect and preserve the experiences and stories of our state's veterans in their own words. We have two volunteers who have been videotaping interviews, which are stored with the interview forms in the archives of the NYS Military Museum and Veterans Research Center

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in Saratoga Springs. Each veteran interviewed receives a copy of the videotape and a "Thank You Veterans" pin. Twenty-four interviews were completed during this fiscal year.

The **Capital Region Veterans Stand Down** was held October 18th at the Colonie Elks Lodge. The Volunteer Manager served on the planning committee and coordinated volunteer assistance. This annual event is a joint community effort between our medical center, NYS Division of Veterans Affairs, New York Guard, Navy Reserve, NYS Department of Labor, the Salvation Army, county social services departments, and veterans service agencies.



A Volunteers and employees walked as a team at the **Making Strides for Breast Cancer Walk** on October 19. Even though it was a cold, rainy day, our VA team of 175 walkers raised over \$20,000 for local research. VA Healthcare Network Upstate New York is a corporate sponsor of the event.

Voluntary Service coordinated our medical center's participation in Albany's **Memorial Day and Veterans Day Parades**. Volunteers and our medical center and Network 2 staff walked with our VAMC banner and American Flags showing our VA and community spirit.

The Volunteer Manager coordinated a **Veterans Day Program** in the Adult Day Health Care Program on November 28th with a group of Korean War Veterans. This celebration was featured on a local TV news channel.

Veterans and Fraternal Organizations participated in an **Adopt a Vet** program during the holiday season, providing food and gift items to veterans and their families.

The American Legion Auxiliary members continued their **ALA Gift Shop** tradition in December 2003 and visited 164 inpatients and outreach program veterans. Each veteran chose a holiday gift to be mailed to his or her family at the auxiliary's expense.

The VAVS Committee's **Annual Holiday Gift Distribution** provided visits, strolling musicians, caroling, gifts and Canteen Books to 150 hospitalized veterans. Over 300 veterans in structured outpatient programs were given gifts and grocery gift certificates.

A **Blessing of Hands** was held January 6th. This nondenominational prayer service was held to congratulate, support, encourage and thank all staff and volunteers who care for our veteran patients.

A **Superbowl Tailgate Party** was held January 25th for our hospitalized veterans and was co-sponsored by the VFW, DAV, American Legion, Korean War Veterans and the National Order of Trenchrats. Veterans enjoyed a luncheon and received NFL team jackets, tee shirts and memorabilia.

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Our **National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans** was a weeklong activity-filled tribute to our men and women veterans. Many community groups, scouts, students, elected officials and musical entertainers participated in visitations, entertainment and activities during the day, evening and weekend hours.

Marine Corps League members conducted a **Re-enactment of the Flag Raising of Iwo Jima** on February 21st at our medical center's front circle, followed by a ceremony that acknowledged many area veterans who were present on the island at that historic moment. A breakfast was held in our 3rd floor auditorium following the ceremony.

NYS DAV Convention - The Volunteer Manager attended the DAV Mid-Winter Convention held in Catskill, New York, in March 2004. A VAVS meeting was conducted for DAV Representatives, Hospital Service Coordinators and Volunteer Managers from around the state. The meeting provides staff with excellent networking opportunities and promotes the continued good will between the DAV and our VAVS programs in Networks 2 and 3.



A **4th of July Patient Picnic** was held for our hospitalized veterans, Hoptel and Fisher House guests, outpatients of our Community Day and Adult Day Health Care Programs, and their visiting family members. Everyone enjoyed the karaoke and all the food. The event was a great success due to the teamwork of all the veterans' service organization and fraternal organization members who worked together to prepare and serve refreshments.

Eagle Scout Joshua Eiffe completed a project that enhanced the gazebo on our Community Day Program grounds on August 14, 2004. He installed a brick walkway that would allow for snow and ice removal, providing a safer walk area for the veterans. He added a flagstone walkway from the gazebo to the picnic table area. The gazebo was stained and shrubs and perennial flowers planted to provide a more relaxing and inviting area for the veterans to gather



Our Medical Center hosted an open house and lunch **“Honoring Our Veterans & Troops – A Family Celebration of Freedom”** on August 20th on our parking lot under large canopies to welcome home recently demobilized military personnel and honor veterans of all eras. The event was open to all veterans, current service members and their families. The event included an opening ceremony, musical entertainment, food, children's activities, and tours of the medical center. All expenses were borne by monetary donations and services obtained by Voluntary Service.

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Our **VAVS Popcorn Fundraising Program** raises funds to send veterans to the National Rehab Games. We enlisted the volunteer assistance of the disabled veterans who have benefited from the experience of participating in these games, which resulted in a noticeable increase in the weekly funds generated by this program. The Military Order of the Purple Heart organization provides the popcorn and supplies

The Volunteer Manager was the contact person for the **US Army's MARS Program**. As e-mail messages from activity duty personnel to hospitalized veterans were funneled to her, they were forwarded to the appropriate Volunteer Manager at the New York State VA Medical Center specified in the message. The e-mails were placed on meal trays, posted in display cases, and utilized by Recreation Therapists for their daily reality orientation and current event discussion groups.

(g) Annual Programs and Continuing Events: Every opportunity is utilized to spread awareness of our quality healthcare services. The following programs and events were planned, conducted and/or supported by Voluntary Service during fiscal year 2004:

Re-Creation Show	Masonic Day
Long-term Care Thanksgiving Dinner	Long-term Care Holiday Dinner
USO Holiday Show	Veterans Day Parade in Albany
National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans	Saratoga Cemetery Veterans Day
4 Chaplains Brotherhood Award/Reception	AMVETS "Because We Care" Day
Memorial Day Parade in Albany	Super Bowl Tailgate Party
Saratoga Cemetery Memorial Day Ceremony	4 th of July Patient Picnic
Volunteer Awards & Recognition Program	Volunteer Week Socials
Cancer Survivors Day Ceremony	Women Veterans Recognition Day
POW/MIA Recognition Day	POW/MIA Remembrance Day
Florence Nightingale Award	Director's Office Teas
Community Day Program Thanksgiving Dinner	Gold Star Mothers' Day

(h) New and Unique Volunteer Assignments

Customer Service: assists the Patient Advocate and Customer Service Coordinator in personal contacts with patients, identifying patients with special needs and potential problems for staff follow up.

Telemedicine: trained by VA Biomed Technician to inspect the telemedicine equipment for completeness and electrical safety. Unpacks, inventories and visually inspects the equipment for completeness. Troubleshoots technical difficulties. Assists with tracking the equipment as it is issued and returned for proper sanitizing and re-inspection.

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Public Relations: prepares press releases and other clerical tasks under the supervision of our Director, Public Relations and Marketing.

Lobby Ambassadors: greet veterans arriving by VA or County vans, obtain wheelchairs for patients as needed and escort them to their clinic appointments.

Pet Therapy Program: Our wonderful four-footed volunteers bring their youthful exuberance and affection to our hospitalized veterans and outpatients.

Biomed Unit: (1) Computer Entry (access program) to input data from manuals. (2) locating equipment throughout the medical center

Police Unit Dispatcher: On evening and weekend hours: answer the phones, radio dispatch of officers, monitoring an alarm computer and maintaining an activity log.

Prosthetic Clerk in Surgical Clinic: restocking and dispensing prosthetic items

Fisher House Bakers: create “aroma therapy” for the families who stay at the comfort home.

Greeter at 5th Floor Lobby: Welcomes veterans to the Subspecialty Clinic floor and directs them (or escorts them) to the appropriate wing and check-in desk.

National Rehab Games Volunteer: assists veterans participating in the events; providing patient transport, serving meals, playing checkers, etc.

Visually Impaired Service Team Volunteers: Visually impaired veterans volunteer to escort other visually impaired veterans to their outpatient clinic appointments, X-rays or lab tests. They facilitate a monthly low vision support group at our medical center, organize recreation activities for blinded veterans and assist other visually impaired veterans to gain access to the computer and the Internet.

Hoptel Desk Clerk: greets and provides orientation to guests; phone coverage

Hoptel Bedmakers: changes bed linens and prepares the room for the next guest.

Lobby Musicians provide soothing and entertaining music for patients, visitors and staff in the main lobby

Good Neighbor Program: volunteers visit homebound veterans for one to two hours each week to provide the caregiver with a much-needed break.

Friendly Inpatient Visitor: visits inpatients, provides socialization, refills water pitchers, straightens out bedside tables, etc.

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Cemetery Information Booth: assist visitors arriving at the Saratoga VA National Cemetery

Cemetery Honor Guards: teams of volunteers provide military funeral honors.

Welcome Buddies: provide a friendly visitor to each newly admitted veteran along with comfort items to make their stay more comfortable.

Tele-reminder: (1) Compensation & Pension appointments. (2) GYN Clinic appointments

Emergency Room Feedback Caller: volunteer calls patients recently seen in our Emergency Room to ask about their ER experience. If patient has any questions, a nurse is readily available to speak with the veteran.

Chess Club: Members of a local chess club come in evenings to engage the hospitalized veterans in the game.

(i) **Assessment of VAVS Committee**

Our **VAVS Committee** met four times in fiscal year 2004. The meetings included announcements of certifications and recertifications of organization representatives and deputy representatives, Management Reports by the Director or her designee and the Care Line Leaders, updates on committees and medical center programs, and announcements of upcoming events. VAVS Committee members disseminate information from these meetings to their organization members.

The sharing of veterans' personal experiences at National Rehabilitation Events bolstered our efforts to fund the patients' trips to these events. Videos of the Winter Sports Clinic, Golden Age Games and Creative Arts Festival have been shown at our meetings and in our main lobby, and are loaned out for organizations' meetings.

Medical center leadership approached Voluntary Service during the summer of 2003 to help find a forum for area veterans who participate in the Network Consumer Council (held in Syracuse) that would be informative about Albany VAMC issues and is responsive to their concerns. Rather than creating a local Consumer Council, we invited those members to join our VAVS Committee meetings. In addition to updates, we have actively facilitated a question and answer period so that concerns and issues from our veterans and organization representatives can be addressed.

The **VAVS Executive Committee** serves to strengthen our Volunteer Program by helping us to achieve goals.

- The committee oversees a "Volunteer of the Month" recognition initiative. Members review the nominations, select the award recipients, and sends notification letters to

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the nominator and nominee. We have obtained a glass case outside the 3rd floor auditorium that is a highly visible area to spotlight our award recipient. The write-up is also posted on Albany's section of the Network 2 VAVS Website. When a new recipient's write-up and photo are posted, the previous recipient's photo is inserted into a special appreciation frame and presented to the recipient as a memento.

- Various fund-raisers were held throughout the year. A George Forman grill/microwave oven combo and a stereo system were donated by the AMVETS to be raffled to support our VAVS GPF account.
- Our VAVS Popcorn Program raises funds to deposit in GPF 1328 to send veterans to the National Rehab Games. During this year, these volunteers have added a "Cans for Veterans" program to obtain deposit money from recycled cans and bottles to increase donations for this general post fund.

The Veterans Service Center Management Office conducted six **Veterans Service Officer meetings** during the fiscal year. The meetings agendas included information on veterans' benefits as well as presentations by our Director, Care Line Managers, CBOC Operations Officer, Voluntary Service, and Network staff.

Our medical center has had a **Veterans Holiday Committee** for many, many years comprised of members from various veterans' organizations. This committee continues to use its fundraising efforts to support VA recreation events, patient activities, inpatient holiday parties, holiday gifts, and sending patients to the National Rehab Games and Creative Arts Festival.

Volunteers actively participated as **Committee Members** of the Management Assistance Council Networks 2 & 3, Network 2 Consumer Council, VetCare Board, Dean's Committee, Women Veterans Committee, CARES Committee, Capital Region Veterans Stand Down Committee, and the Saratoga VA Cemetery Support Committee.

2. Program Management: Voluntary Service is part of the Service Line under the Operations Officer to the Director. The Service Line's monthly meetings have focused on our team effort to provide material support and guidance to each other as well as to each of the Clinical Care Lines and to strategize to meet established goals (Network and Medical Center Performance Measures, and local priorities).

(a) Staffing: Voluntary Service is currently staffed by a Volunteer Manager GS-12 and Volunteer Specialist GS-10. The Director's Office has supported our volunteer recruitment efforts by assigning a Master's program college student from the Cooperative Education Program to a Community Relations Specialist position. Upon completion of orientation and training, this position will support both the Director of Public Relations &

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Marketing and Voluntary Service. For Voluntary Service, her focus will be to outreach to local businesses and education centers and meet with VA staff to create more volunteer positions on evening and weekend hours.

We are fortunate to have two loyal, talented volunteers who serve as office receptionists, type our donation acknowledgment letters and assist us with the day-to-day operation of our office.

(b) Awards & Public Recognition

- The Volunteer Manager was awarded “Customer Service of the Month” for the month of December 2003.
- The Northeast Chapter Korean War Veterans Association honored the Volunteer Manager with a plaque in appreciation of her selfless assistance at a dinner on December 13, 2003.
- Volunteer Charles Drew was honored as a medalist at the Capital District Jefferson Awards for Public Service ceremony and dinner. He was one of nine finalists for this prestigious community service award.
- The Customer Service Committee chose Voluntary Service as the “Customer Service Group of the Month” for April 2004.
- Volunteer Thomas Lindsay was featured in the “Caring Community” section of the Albany Times Union newspaper on April 27, 2004 for his service as a Welcome Buddy (visiting newly admitted veterans).
- Throughout the month of May 2004, excerpts from an interview with volunteer Florence Mitchell was featured on TV news channel Fox 23 in their “Living to be 100” series.
- On May 12, 2004, the Volunteer Administrators Association of the Capital Region presented a Philanthropic Contribution Award to Voluntary Service’s Because We Care program, which provides clothing, and toiletries to veterans in need.
- The Retired Senior Volunteer Program presented our VA Volunteers June and Kenneth Hunter with an RSVP Service Award Honorable Mention at their May 24th recognition ceremony.
- Volunteer Charles Drew received a Certificate of Honorable Mention for the George H. Seal Memorial Award in May 2004.
- Two of our pet therapy dogs, Paddington and Oliver, were awarded the National Pet Therapy Planetree Award in September 2004.

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(c) Training and Orientation: Volunteer applicants are interviewed and complete their initial **orientation** process on a one-to-one basis. We have overprinted the back of the Application for Voluntary Service VA 10-7055 to include a checklist for applicants to initial upon completion of each orientation/ training element. Orientation includes training with handouts on HIPAA, Safety, Fire Procedures, Emergency Preparedness, Hazardous Materials, Sexual Harassment, Diversity in the Workplace, Infection Control, TB Tests, Patient Rights and Patient Abuse. Each person is given a Volunteer Handbook, PPD verification sheet, vehicle registration form and a copy of our most recent Network 2 Volunteer Newsletter.

Medical center staff and volunteers received their mandatory **annual safety training** in October 2003 by attending the exhibits in our auditorium, which reviewed policies and procedures that promote a safe environment. The exhibits used storyboards, videos and handouts to educate staff and volunteers while they followed the path and completed a quiz sheet. Volunteer attendance was sent to Voluntary Service for our education files. Every effort is made to notify volunteers of this annual training requirement. Flyers are mailed and posted. Volunteers who miss the training opportunity are provided a booklet and quiz. Those who return the completed quiz are given credit for the training.

The 6th annual **Network 2 Volunteer Conference** was held June 17 & 18 in Syracuse, New York. The theme of the conference was “Our Turn to Serve”. Nineteen organization representatives and deputy representatives attended from Albany.

a. The Keynote Speaker was Chancellor Robert L. King from the State University of New York. He spoke about his commitment to building strategic partnerships with our volunteer program.

b. Community partners throughout our network were honored at our opening ceremony by the Network Director and Volunteer Managers. For the Albany VAMC, Certificates of Appreciation were presented to representatives from the Xerox Corporation and VetCare Board for their generous support of medical center programs.

c. The retreat was a great opportunity for volunteers to meet our new Network Director, network with their counterparts and staff from the other medical centers, and learn about ideas to strengthen and build our volunteer program. The volunteer managers presented a “State of VAVS Report” on our current and future programs and goals. The PowerPoint demonstration gave examples from each station on how volunteer programs impact on the network’s performance measures and the High Performance Development Model (a service measurement). There is a correlation between what volunteers do and what the facility and network need to accomplish. Volunteers are our stakeholders. They spread awareness of our programs and our quality care of veterans – and are key members of advisory committees. Volunteers provide transportation, escort and shuttle services to provide veterans **Access to Care**. Outreach events, Stand Downs, etc. help to **Build Healthy Communities**. Donations of money, material gifts and time contribute to **Cost**. Diversional recreation activities, donation of equipment and clothing are examples of **Restoration of Function**. Our customer service programs contribute to **Domain of Quality**

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and **Satisfaction**. What volunteers do has a positive impact on our medical center and our off-station sites, the veterans and their families, and the community.

Information from our conference is included on our Network 2 VAVS Website:

<http://www.va.gov/visns/visn02/vet/volunteer.html>

HIPAA Training is provided to all volunteers. Documentation that policy information was read and understood is maintained in their official volunteer folders.

Computer Security Training was completed for all staff and volunteers with computer access.

Voluntary Service implemented a variety of initiatives during this year to **educate our staff** about the entire scope of the VAVS program:

- Articles were placed in the Notable News (daily computer announcements) to call attention to our special events, new initiatives, and to honor our Volunteer of the Month.
- A PowerPoint program and presentation on our Annual Narrative Report for FY03 was provided at a Local Leadership Council meeting January 5, 2004.
- Voluntary Service staff spoke at a Diagnostics & Care Line staff meeting on July 8, 2004.
- Voluntary Service participated in each New Employee Orientations to give an overview of our VAVS programs and their relationship with hospital programs and services.

(d) The Patient Transportation Office is staffed solely by volunteers. The Volunteer Specialist supervises and trains the volunteers in this program. The office is staffed by an average of 12 volunteers each day. The volunteers transport hospitalized veterans and outpatients (ambulatory and in wheelchairs) to scheduled appointments within the facility on weekdays. During this fiscal year, volunteers transported **9,071** veterans to their appointments (1,482 more trips than last year; a **20% increase** in productivity.)

In addition to patient trips, volunteers perform the following customer service tasks:

- Return empty stretchers to the Operating Room after patient is returned to the ward.
- Transport patient discharges from ward to the lobby entranceway and then return ward's wheelchair
- Wheelchair roundup to retrieve our Lobby wheelchairs
- Completing big and small mail-out projects
- Serve as alternates for our Welcome Buddy volunteers

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- Deliver flower arrangements received for inpatients
- Deliver toiletry and coffee orders to the nursing stations

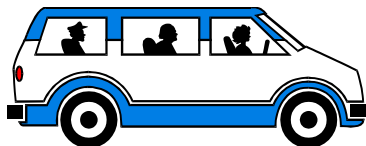
(e) Volunteer Transportation Program: Charles Drew volunteered to cover the Hospital Service Coordinator position when our HSC suddenly resigned on October 31, 2003. On February 2, 2004, the Disabled American Veterans' National Service Officer selected Mr. Drew for the coordinator position. During this fiscal year, he coordinated the program with dedicated, reliable volunteer drivers. Weekend coverage for emergency room and ward discharges has saved the medical center considerable contract costs.

On May 21, 2004 our Medical Center received three 12-passenger vans and one 7-passenger van. Two vans were placed at Albany, one in Malone and one for Schenectady County. On July 1st, our Volunteer Transportation Program encompassed Schenectady County.

We presently have fourteen vans in operation providing transportation to and from our medical center and our CBOC's. We have placed vans in secure locations in Fulton County, Hudson, Malone, Plattsburgh, Schenectady, Schroon Lake and Sidney because these locations are many hours away from Albany.

Our HSC coordinates a weekly shuttle utilizing a government van from Facilities Management Service to transport supplies, labs and X-rays to and from the VAMC and the Plattsburgh, Glens Falls and Elizabethtown Clinics. Van drivers for our out-placed vans also transport labs and X-rays to save the medical center courier service costs. **In addition**, this fiscal year, blind veterans needing transportation to the West Haven VAMC in Connecticut for blind rehab training were transported by our Volunteer Transportation Program.

The Volunteer Managers in Network 2 developed a **DAV Driver Handbook** to assist our VA volunteer drivers in carrying out their assigned duties more effectively. The handbook contains DAV Transportation Network van rules, our Network Memorandum "Network 2 Transportation Volunteer Drivers and Vehicle Usage", transportation driver position description, forms and instructions. We are committed to following standardized regulations regarding the vans being used strictly for patient transportation to a medical appointment.



TRANSPORTATION TRENDS

	FY'02	FY'03	FY'04	Comparison FY'03 to 04
Miles Traveled	165,270	138,569	224,596	+86,027 (+62%)
Veterans Served	9,802	6,941	13,669	+6,728 (+97%)

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(f) Community Relations and Activities

VA Voluntary Service Network Newsletter: Volunteer Managers in Network 2 in collaboration with the Network Communications Office, publish a quarterly newsletter that is mailed to our volunteers, community partners, elected officials, area schools and our veteran advocates. The newsletter contains a Message from the Network Director, volunteer opportunities, articles pertinent to each station, donation wish lists, and calendar of events.

A readership survey was mailed to Network 2 volunteers in the summer of 2004. Results showed 77% read the publication right away; 98% read nearly the entire publication; 28% pass it along to a friend, family member, etc.; and 85% do not have e-mail.

VISN 2 Voluntary Service Website: our website promotes volunteerism and includes our Annual Narrative Report, Network Rep & Dep Conference notes, volunteer opportunities and donation needs lists.

VISN 2 Community Calendar: Information on upcoming special events and programs are submitted to the VISN Web Team for posting on our Network web page to promote attendance.

Speaking Engagements: Voluntary Service staff again this year attended numerous events in the community representing the Voluntary Service Program and the medical center. The Volunteer Manager was the guest speaker, or gave the remarks or presentation at the following events:

- Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8692 Loyalty Day Ceremony
- American Legion Auxiliary Department of New York Third District Spring Conference
- DAV Mid-Winter Conference
- American Ex-POW Meeting
- Post Office Employee Veterans Meeting
- Korean War Veterans Dinner

Visiting Officials: Voluntary Service prepared itineraries for visiting officials from elected officials and veterans organizations, providing meeting opportunities and tours of areas of interest to these individuals. The visitors included:

- Congressman Michael McNulty
- Congressman John Sweeney
- Senator Neil Breslin
- Assemblyman James Tedisco
- Assemblyman Robert Prentiss
- Assemblyman Paul Tonko
- Albany County Executive Michael Breslin

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Rensselaer County Executive Kathy Jimino
Charles Diamond, Staff Assistant to Congressman McNulty
Ben Hager, Intern representing Senator Hillary Rodham-Clinton
Gabe Sganga, Legislative Aide for Assemblyman Tocci
Michael Miller, Staff Assistant to Assemblyman Tedesco
Mayor Brian Stratton
George Basher, Director, NYS Division of Veterans Affairs
Benjamin Weisbroth, Deputy Director, NYS Division of Veterans Affairs
New York Naval Militia personnel
National Commander of the American Legion
American Legion Field Service Representative
DAV Department Commander
DAV Auxiliary NYS Department Commander
DAV Auxiliary Senior Vice Commander
Order of Eastern Star Greene-Ulster District Officers
VFW State Hospital Chairman
VFW Auxiliary State President (February and September)

Stand Downs: The Volunteer Manager served as the coordinator for community volunteers at the October 2003 Capital Region Veterans Stand Down. She recruited, assigned and supervised community volunteers who served as van drivers, squad leader assistants, childcare room helpers, registration desk workers, and dining area helpers.

VetCare Board: The Volunteer Manager serves as a member and recording secretary for the non-profit Veterans Care and Resources Development Corporation (VetCare) Board. The Board is comprised of community members and medical center staff to assist in establishing effective programs to meet the needs of veterans for non-medical supportive services.

Vocational Advisory Board: The Volunteer Specialist is a member of the Glenmont Job Corps Center Vocational Advisory Board sharing expertise and defining skills that students need to compete in the workforce.

(g) Report of Program Goals

(1) FY'04 Goals Achieved

Improve Access to Care:

- Maintained volunteer positions at CBOC's.
- Provide complete weekday coverage for parking lot shuttle volunteer schedule
- Purchased magnetic sign to perch on top of shuttle van roof so the van is more visible to patients while patrolling the parking lot.
- Maintained an adequate supply of wheelchairs for outpatients' use.

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Improve Customer Service:

- Established new volunteer programs that have direct patient care impact (i.e. Customer Service Assistant, Good Neighbor Program, 5th floor Greeter and Friendly Visitor on Inpatient Wards)
- Provided newspaper purchase and delivery for some of our long-term patients
- Greeter Desk weekend volunteer coverage increased. Our Lobby Ambassador position has enhanced our greeter program by greeting veterans as they step off the vans, getting a wheelchair for those who require one and escorting them to their clinic appointments.
- Provided an assortment of magnifying eyeglasses for veterans who are not eligible for eyeglasses.
- Provided canteen books for hospitalized veterans to pay for haircuts provided by a professional, licensed beautician under contract with Canteen Service.
- Provided a box of various clothing items to the nursing supervisors for inpatient and emergency room patients' emergency needs that occur on off-tour hours when our Volunteer office is closed.
- Increased visibility within our facility by presenting an overview of Voluntary Service at all New Employee Orientations and holding staff training sessions throughout the medical center.
- Promoted the VA in the community by increasing number of community groups and performances in our National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Week.

Improve Healthcare Value:

- Weekday operation of our Welcome Buddy Cart to welcome all new admissions and give them personal comfort items to make their stay more comfortable
- Van driver volunteer transports lab specimens and paperwork for our laboratory to a community hospital (a cost savings for our medical center).
- Van drivers for our out-placed vans also transport labs and X-rays to save the medical center courier service costs.
- Volunteer Transportation volunteers transport blind veterans to West Haven, CT, to the blind rehabilitation training program.

Enhance, Preserve and Restore Patient Function:

- Initiated participation of VA Volunteers in the Veterans History Project to collect memories and documents of veterans and to preserve their stories of their experiences for future generations.
- Established a General Post Fund, obtained donations and outlined procedures to provide funding for outpatients referred to the West Roxbury or West Haven VAMC's for cardiac procedures but are not eligible for VA beneficiary travel to pay the travel costs.

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Improve Volunteer Staff Professional Development:

- Meetings held on a regular basis in Syracuse or Canandaigua for all Volunteer Managers in our Network.
- Attended monthly Volunteer Administrators Association of the Capital Region general meetings and Board meetings.
- Participated in a volunteer conference especially designed for Volunteer Directors and Volunteer Leaders, the VAVS National Advisory Committee meeting, and the National VA Voluntary Service Training Conference for Volunteer Managers.

(2) FY'05 Goals

Improve Access to Care:

- Continue to recruit for volunteer opportunities at CBOC's and other off-station sites
- Schedule physicals for every current driver for our Volunteer Transportation Program to insure safety of the veterans we transport.
- Obtain donations to purchase wheelchairs for inpatient wards and clinics
- Involve VAVS and VSOs in transitional Assistance Programs

Improve Customer Service:

- Provide on-going staff training sessions to improve quality of volunteer supervision, increase volunteer opportunities, and increase knowledge of our VAVS program. Evaluate staff training.
- Increase volunteer participation in Greeter Program on evening and weekend hours
- Establish a volunteer-staffed patient travel lounge/wheelchair center when space is available
- Increase volunteer opportunities within the medical center, Saratoga VA National Cemetery and off-station VA sites
- Create new beneficial partnerships within the community that will enhance services to our veterans

Improve Healthcare Value:

- Increase nontraditional volunteer and donor support from the community. Increase participation by faith based and community organizations.
- Develop a volunteer assignment to support the "My HealtheVet" program.
- Increase volunteer participation in our "Good Neighbor Program" to provide homebound veterans socialization while the primary caregiver gets a much-needed break.
- Establish a "Silver Spoons" patient feeding program
- Increase volunteer positions on inpatient wards on days, evenings and weekends to provide more direct patient care opportunities
- Increase volunteer support to all Care Lines through the Volunteer.gov/gov Website portal and other Internet volunteer recruitment sites.

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- Increase more volunteer positions that will appeal to the student and 20-49 age population to correspond with our recruitment efforts. Develop partnerships with youth serving organizations.

Enhance, Preserve and Restore Patient Function:

- Increase participation of veterans in the Veterans History Project to collect memories and documents of veterans and to preserve their stories of their experiences for future generations.
- Expand pilot program for funding transportation for cardiology outpatients ineligible for beneficiary travel to other subspecialties
- Obtain sufficient donations to transport Albany veterans to the Winter Sports Clinic, Golden Age Games, Wheelchair Games and Creative Arts Festival.

Improve Volunteer Staff Professional Development:

- Participate in Network 2 Volunteer Service's conference calls and meetings to increase consistency and strengthen our program.
- Increase participation in community volunteer organizations' meetings and events
- Attend VAVS National Advisory Committee meeting.

(h) Professional Development:

Public Relations: The Volunteer Manager provided public relations coverage in the absence of the medical center's Director of Public Relations and Marketing.

Professional Affiliations: The Volunteer Manager and Volunteer Specialist are members of the Volunteer Administrators Association of the Capital Region (VAACR). The Volunteer Manager is also a member of their Scholarship Fund Committee, which supports members' continuing education expenses. During this fiscal year, the Volunteer Manager was re-elected to a second term as the VAACR Executive Board as Vice President for Publicity.

The Volunteer Manager is a member of the American Society of Directors of Volunteer Services and Association for Volunteer Administration.

Professional Development: The Volunteer Manager participated as a member of a national VAVS Satisfaction Survey Task Group.

The Volunteer Manager participated in a volunteer conference especially designed for Volunteer Directors and Volunteer Leaders on October 16 and 17, 2003 in Latham, New York, which was sponsored by the Volunteer Administrators' Association of the Capital

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Region (VAACR), Directors of Volunteers in Agencies (DOVIA) and Capital Region Association for Directors of Volunteer Services in Health Care (CRADVS).

The Volunteer Manager attended the VAVS National Advisory Committee meeting in Orlando, Florida, June 9-12, 2004.

Training: The Volunteer Manager participated in the National VA Voluntary Service Training Conference for Volunteer Managers in Reno, Nevada, August 24-26, 2004.

The Volunteer Manager and Volunteer Specialist exceeded the 40 hours of continuing education training required of Stratton VAMC employees.

KAREN B. HAAS
Volunteer Manager

STEPHANIE BONENFANT
Volunteer Specialist